

## News Release

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## FREDERICK COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE INITIATIVES RESULT IN BUDGETARY SAVINGS

**FREDERICK, MD** – The Frederick Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) today commended the new Division of Fire & Rescue Services (DFRS) management team for achieving <u>budgetary savings over the last six months</u> and then determining the reallocation of those savings through review of current practices with an emphasis on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance related to firefighters.

The board appointed Denise Pouget as DFRS director and chief in July 2013 and tasked her with guiding all facets of fire and rescue services within Frederick County, including career personnel and volunteers. She performs administrative and supervisory work in the management of rescue and fire suppression activities, fire protection, injury prevention, pre-hospital emergency medical services, protection from hazardous materials emergencies and disaster services.

Board President Blaine Young commented, "On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, we commend Chief Pouget and the management team she has set up for an excellent job in restructuring the division and focusing on the important safety and health issues related to the county's fire and rescue equipment and personnel.

"Her efforts not only have tightened the budget in this important division, but have now allowed the county to hold a firefighter recruiting class for 16 outstanding personnel. These recruits are already classified as paramedics, so they will hit the ground running. As approximately 80 – 90 percent of calls for assistance in Frederick County are emergency medical service related, the citizens of Frederick County will be well served by the new recruits. We look forward to continued good reports from the fire and rescue services division."

(more)

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Highlights of actions taken by Chief Pouget and the DFRS management team include:

- Initiation of annual countywide NFPA fire hose testing from an approved third party vendor.
- Initiation of annual countywide OSHA testing of self-contained breathing apparatus from an approved third party vendor.
- Analysis by a third-party vendor that included a review of the DFRS career ladder and a review of incident command structure when compared to neighboring department levels.
- Selection and soon implementation of a records management database for all career personnel and volunteers, which will allow for more accurate training and certification verification.
- Auditing of current inventory and the associated policies and procedures. A new inventory management
  system and updated policies will allow for more efficient tracking and maintenance of lower inventory
  levels and the elimination of waste in the system.
- Funds previously appropriated for the rechassis of two ambulances are no longer required, as the units are being placed out of service. The funds will instead go toward the procurement and implementation of mobile data terminals countywide. The terminals were identified as a critical safety need for incident response by career and volunteer personnel.
- Reprioritization of funds set aside for uniforms and equipment will instead go toward replacing fire hose that was found to be non-compliant.
- Initiated a firefighter recruitment class for 16 currently certified paramedics based on the current open positions. The last recruitment process was held in 2010 and the recruits were hired in May 2012 (all non-paramedics).

For additional information, contact DFRS Financial Services Manager Bob Baker 301-600-6869 or via e-mail at rbaker@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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